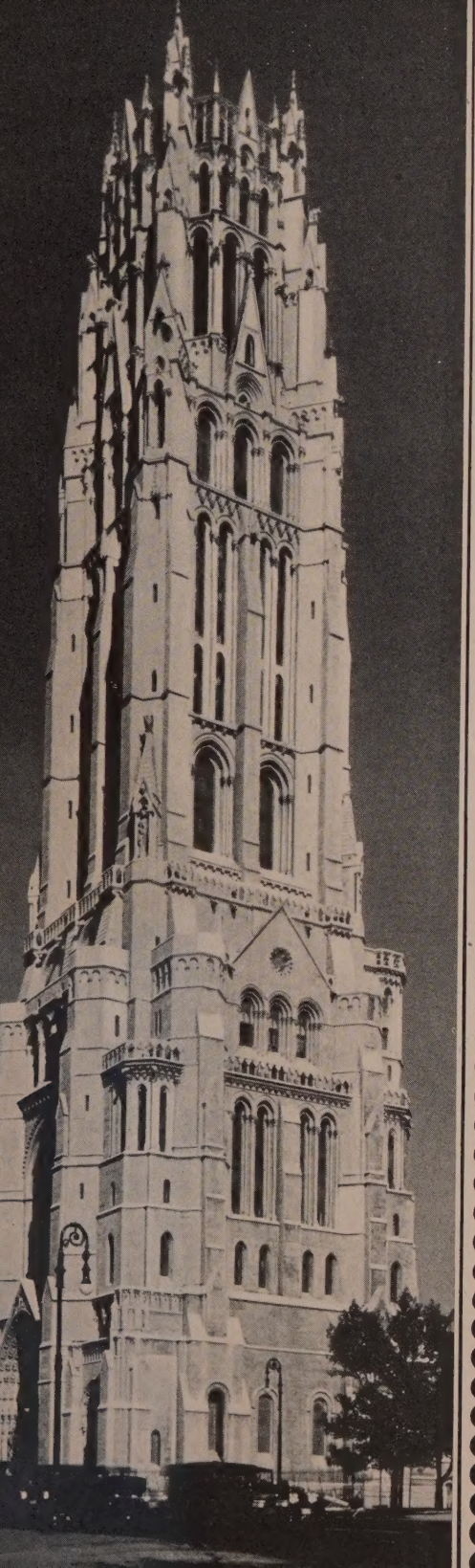

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On Shouldering One's Own Responsibility

The Six Carillons of Amsterdam

The Movie Outlook

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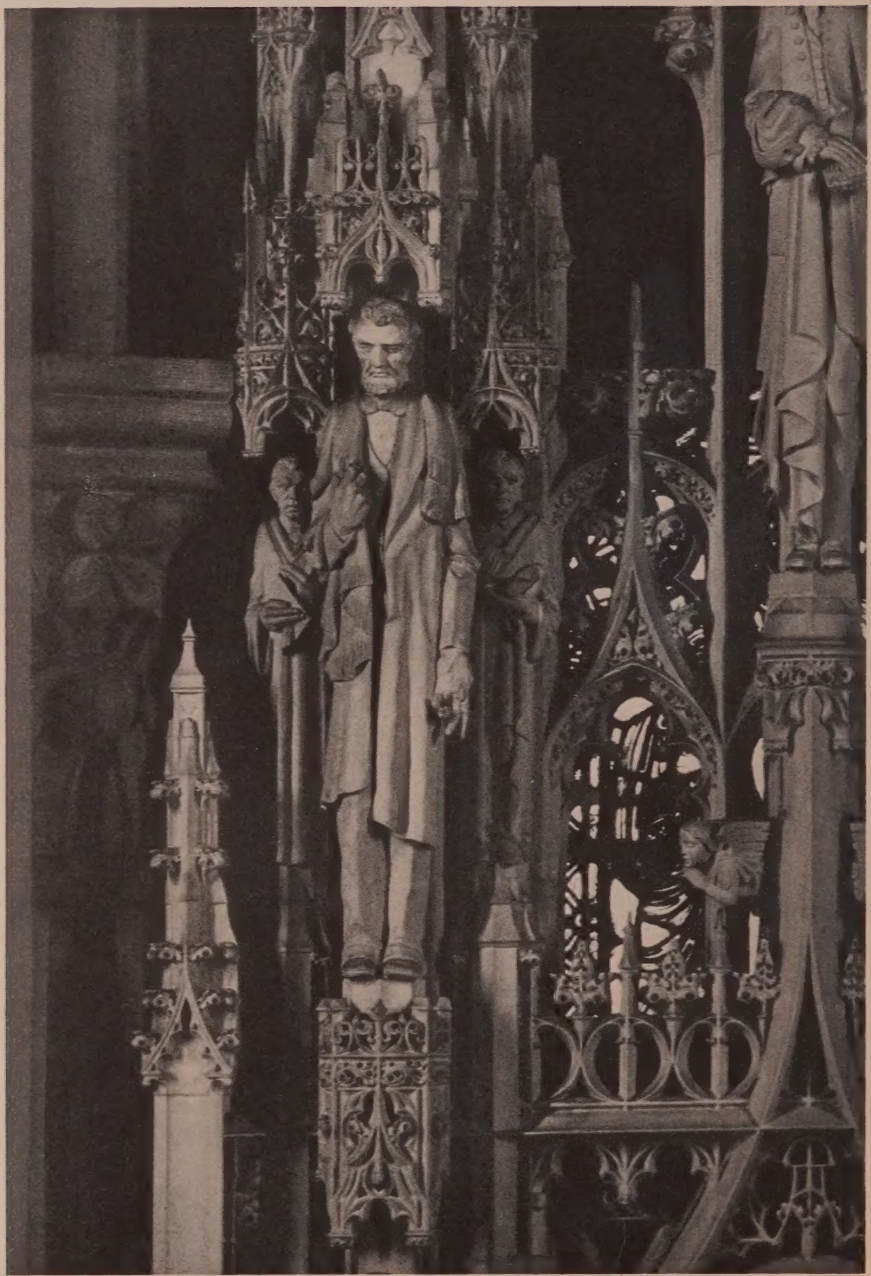

ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN THE CHANCEL SCREEN

This group, Booker T. Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and General Samuel Armstrong, is one of the compositions in the panel of "Humanitarians" in the center bay of the chancel screen.

On Shouldering One's Own Responsibility

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

A young man suffering serious eye trouble was once given by his oculist the following diagnosis: "You are living here on these western prairies where you look out constantly over a vast expanse; you need something close at hand to lean your eyes against." One suspects that many today are in a similar case. We look out constantly over a world in turmoil. Never did the range of an ordinary man's vision take in such wide scope and dwell on such immense affairs. In consequence, many of us have trouble with our vision. We need something close at hand to lean our eyes against and I venture to suggest what it well might be—individual character shouldering its own responsibility.

At once the disparity between the wide, expansive look and this nearer look is obvious to all. On the one side a world in turmoil and on the other an individual person assuming his moral responsibility — how disproportionate they seem! Yet, before we surrender to that feeling, we well may think the matter through. Certainly it has happened repeatedly in history that when a stormy era was past and in retrospect men considered it, the truth was evident which the Kingdom of Judah in the eighth century B.C. illustrates. That was a troubled time also but as one regards it now one's vision inevitably draws in from the wide expanse to one man alone with his conscience and his God, shouldering his own personal responsibility and saying, "Here am I; send me."

If some one says, that was the great prophet Isaiah whom all the world honors, I answer, He certainly was not the great prophet Isaiah on the day when first God said to him, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and he in reply pledged his life: "Here am I; send me." He was simply a young man, unimportant and unknown in a troubled epoch, translating the social need of his time into a personal responsibility and saying, "Send me." Yet, if we wish to understand the eighth century B.C. in Judah, that young man is the key to it. It may be that taking our eyes for a few moments from the wide expanse of the world's problem to lean them against that kind of character is not so disproportionate an act as at first it seemed.

At any rate, it should go without saying that there is no solving of social problems in the large without that kind of character. One ill consequence of our present obsession with the titanic affairs of the world is the temptation to forget that in the first instance character is personal, that it does not exist in general but within persons, and that there is no possibility of so putting together weak characters as to secure a strong society. No agglomeration of crab apple trees will make an astrachan apple orchard. No collection of cheap books can make a great library. If a moron marries a moron and they have

half-wits for their children, no one can so skilfully combine those individuals as to build a lovely family. Personal character is not a small item in the midst of the great world's problem; personal character is the foundation of everything.

If some one says that this is obvious, I answer, Surely, it is obvious but would you think so to look at the world today? Upon the contrary, not only is this obvious truth commonly neglected in practise, it is sometimes denied in theory. At any rate, never in my lifetime, I think, has the temptation been so strong to sidestep the shouldering of one's own moral responsibility, and concerning that temptation, its cause, consequence, and cure, we think today.

For one thing, we are tempted to evade the shouldering of our personal responsibility because of self-pity. How can a man look constantly on this tempestuous world without being tempted to feel sorry for himself because he was born in so disheveled a generation? These are bad times, we say, and when, as happens to every one of us, the bad times in general impinge upon us in particular, that only accentuates our opportunity to feel sorry for ourselves. Walk among the pews of this congregation and come into the chancel; see how many of us are tempted to live in a cold, gray, overcast mood of self-commiseration.

Now, feeling sorry for oneself is one of the most disintegrating forces that can play on character. Moreover, self-pity does not depend, as we commonly think it does, upon the ill circumstance of some particular generation. If some of us here are self-pitiers, be sure of this: we would have been self-pitiers no matter in what generation we had been born. Self-pity is a personal habit like bad temper or drunkenness or gossiping; it does not depend upon the special circumstances of a particular generation. The bemoaners have been present in every age. Among us are many, for example, who deplore the breakdown of character in youth. Listen, then, to this and date it if you can; it is a father speaking about his boy: "The more I ponder over the capers my son is cutting, and the life and habits the thoughtless lad is plunging headlong into, in what amours he has engaged himself, the more worried and fearful I get. . . . I know I once was in my prime and did all this myself, but then I showed some self-restraint." That is from an old Roman play by Plautus, written over two hundred years before Christ. Or if it is the general breakdown of religion and social decency that we lament, listen to this and see if you can date it: "There never was a time when a whole people were so little governed by settled good principles." Those were the good old days in New England before the American Revolution. Clearly, if we are bemoaners now we would have been bemoaners then, for self-commiseration is a personal habit and the cure of it is not to dream of being translated to a fairer world where there is nothing to bemoan. The cure of it is to deal with oneself. George Bernard Shaw makes one of his characters say to a self-pitying woman, "Your native language is the language of Shakespeare and Milton and The Bible; and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon."

There is a Scandinavian saying which some of us might well take as a rallying cry for our lives: "The north wind made the Vikings." Wherever did we get the idea that secure and pleasant living, the absence of difficulty and the

comfort of ease, ever of themselves made people either good or happy? Upon the contrary, people who pity themselves go on pitying themselves even when they are laid softly on a cushion, but always in history character and happiness have come to people in all sorts of circumstances, good, bad, and indifferent, when they shouldered their personal responsibility. So, repeatedly the north wind has made the Vikings.

At any rate, that young man long ago in Judah never would have gotten fairly started if he had pitied himself. "In the year that king Uzziah died"—so begins the great passage in which Isaiah describes his call. Now, King Uzziah had been a righteous and fortunate monarch and his long and happy reign was followed by disaster, so that this opening phrase might be translated: In the year when security and prosperity ended in Judah and trouble and turmoil came, in *that* year when disaster fell upon the nation and the world, I said, Here am I; send me. So, once again, the north wind made the Viking.

Again, we are tempted to evade the shouldering of personal responsibility because we substitute for it a general interest in social reform which, so we dream, is going to rearrange the world until everything will be lovely for everybody. The more thoughtful areas of young people with whom I deal, especially in the seminary and the university, are commonly divided into two groups: first, partisans of individual faith and character; second, partisans of social reform. The first say that we must get good people to achieve a good society and the second say that we must get a good society in order to achieve good people. They both are correct. The quarrel between them, for it often becomes that, is like a quarrel between the right foot and the left as to which of them one should walk on; one should walk on both.

Of course it is true that we cannot weave a good society out of sleazy characters and it is also true that the society which we have now, with its slums that damn character, its wars, its acquisitive motivation, its inequalities and inequities, must be radically changed before millions of individuals will have a decent chance at character. This morning remember that I have said that before, say it now, will say it again. This tunnel must be dug from both ends. We need good people to make a good society and we need a good society to make good people. Today, however, I am dealing with a special area of young persons, some of whom, I think, are fooling themselves. I mean, they find it easier to become excited over social reform than to deal intensively with their own characters. They are making a general interest in world problems a substitute for resolute grappling with their own inward needs.

We have been repeatedly told that we are tempted to do the opposite, to run away from the large social tasks of mankind to the easier, lovelier, more satisfying area of individual faith and life. Undoubtedly that is true. Probably it is true about some here today. Many find it easy to make personal faith and life an ivory tower to which they retreat from the large problems of mankind. But we have been told this for so long that those who keep on saying it may well listen to the other truth. I see people fleeing in precisely the opposite direction. They are making a general interest in social reform an ivory tower to which they run away from the far more searching problem of

shouldering their personal responsibility. They are, for example, pacifists in general but they have such a quality of spirit that they break up the peace of any group they enter. They are all for social justice but they are so badly twisted inside that nobody who knows them can trust them to be just in a private judgment. They proclaim that racial prejudice is one of the most gigantic evils in the world, but when one comes close to them one sees that they never seriously have dealt with some of their pet prejudices. They ardently say that the world needs to be changed but their neighbors know that, however that may be, *they* certainly need to be changed. They are like Hogarth's pauper, imprisoned for debt himself but still busy with plans for paying the debt of the British Empire.

In an English cathedral, it is said, there is a tomb enclosing the body of a clergyman of former times and on it is this epitaph: "He was a painful preacher of the truth." I know my own soul and yours well enough to know that what I am saying now is the painful truth. Suppose that the social reforms of which men think most today were now successfully achieved. Can any one who, in his mind's eye, visualizes that world of a redeemed society suppose that then personal character would be called for less? Surely, personal character would be called for more. We extend collectivism, let us say, enlarge the area within which life is socialized, and men work, not for private gain, but for public service. What does that involve? That involves new dimensions of public spirit and new motives of social devotion inside people. Or we spread our technical efficiency until men need no longer work long hours—five hours, four hours, three hours daily is enough. What does that involve? The use of leisure is one of the severest tests of and demands on character that the human race has ever faced. Or we end war, build a world community, and organize the brotherhood of man. But that calls for a breadth of thought, an expansiveness of sympathy, a freedom from prejudice, a capacity for skilled and unselfish administration, such that one sometimes wonders if man can be changed enough so that we could keep a world community supposing that we could get one.

To be sure, this is not the whole story. A better society, some one says, will call out and help to produce superior character. Quite right. That is a great hope. A coöperative society might demand and so help to create cooperative character, but it is romantic nonsense to leave the matter so. On every side today we see people called on for better character, if ever they were in human history, and yet there are doubtless some here who have not seriously shouldered their own moral responsibility.

At any rate, that young man in Judah never would have become the prophet Isaiah without this grace and courage we are speaking of today. Recall him as he stood face to face with the living God. What did he put first as the problem he felt most acute? "I am a man of unclean lips," he said first and then, "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." So he put his personal problem first. He knew the initial difficulty lay there. Before he talked too much about the sins of society, he faced *his* sins. Before he blamed the world, he blamed himself. Before he confessed the evils of his people, he confessed his own. He began with personal cleansing and regenera-

tion. Any one who thus has gone through the experience of a deep, interior transformation which has changed his motives and recreated his spirit, understands that no social reform and no rearranged society can ever be a substitute for that.

Again, we are tempted to evade this resolute dealing with our own personal responsibility because in the face of the public need what the individual can do seems so disproportionately small. How like Gulliver in the land of the giants one feels today amid the titanic forces that sweep across the world! If one is to shoulder his personal responsibility with zest, it must be because he thinks it worth while. But so disproportionate to the need is the contribution of the individual that multitudes think, What is the use? That is their answer when God calls them, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" They say, What's the use?

No pulpit eloquence, however profuse, can smother that mood. It is based on facts too incontrovertible. The forces that sweep across the world are titanic. The population problem, for example, as in Great Britain or India or Japan; the war problem everywhere; the swing of the capitalistic system through its full cycle into overproduction and underdistribution—one has only to name a few of these apparently resistless floodtides to feel tossed like a helpless chip upon their turmoil. To rise up, then, in the face of all that, saying, "Here am I; send me," seems to many not so much an evidence of great character as of arrogance and megalomania. That, I take it, is one of the most prevalent moods of our day and, as you see, it critically endangers the shouldering of personal responsibility.

Far be it from me, who so often feel the pressure of that mood myself, merely to rail at it. There is plenty of justification for it. But in more thoughtful hours one knows that it is not the whole story. If in an epoch like this a man is to keep his head level, he must beware of being so obsessed by the titanic problems of the world that, becoming a determinist, he feels himself merely a helpless chip tossed on the sea. That is to lose one's very soul.

At this point we need again a painful preacher of the truth. If you are a determinist now, he would say, because you feel yourself helplessly tossed like a chip on the social floods, you would have been a determinist in any generation you were born into; only, probably in another age you would have given another explanation of it. In one generation you would have said you were a helpless chip because of astrology; you were born under the wrong star. In another generation you would have felt yourself a helpless chip because of predestination; you would have said you could do nothing because God decided everything. In another generation you would have felt helpless because of materialism; you would have thought yourself only a cog in a great machine. Now, however, you feel yourself helpless because you think you are a chip tossed futilely about by the great social forces.

Observe that in this kind of determinism we are dealing not with a theory but with a mood, an emotional habit, trying to rationalize itself through various theories that chance to be at hand and so make itself intellectually respectable. But the primary and creative factor there is not anything intellectual at all; it is an emotional mood. Mark Twain made a penetrating com-

ment when he said: "What a man sees in the human race is merely himself in the deep and honest privacy of his own heart. Byron despised the race because he despised himself. I feel as Byron did and for the same reason." Just so! Every good psychiatrist understands that, in general, the attitude of a man toward the cosmos at large or toward mankind as a whole is likely to be the projection on a large canvas of his attitude toward himself. If a man despises the race, he probably first despised himself. If a man is a cosmic determinist, he probably has felt himself helpless in the presence of his own life problem. And obviously, the cure of determinism, so produced, does not lie in theory but in an honest facing of what actually happens in practical life when a man stops feeling himself to be a helpless chip and shoulders his responsibility.

Lyman Beecher, for example, was a towering figure in New England in his day. One week-end he was to exchange pulpits with a neighboring pastor, a man who held a stiff theory of predestination, while on that point Lyman Beecher was for his time fairly liberal. So on Sunday morning both men started from home, each going to the other's church, and met midway. As they paused, the neighboring minister said, "Doctor Beecher, I wish to call to your attention that before the creation of the world God arranged that you were to preach in my pulpit and I in yours on this particular Sabbath." "Is that so?" said Lyman Beecher, glaring at him. "Then I won't do it!" and he turned his horse around and went to his own church. I appeal to the facts. When a man refuses to regard himself as a helpless chip and resolutely shoulders his responsibility, things do begin to happen not disproportionate to large consequences.

Certainly, things begin to happen inside personal character. Long ago, in Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire you might have seen a fourteen-year-old boy very homesick, crying. His schoolmates were making fun of him. His clothes were outlandish; his mother had fashioned them and stained them with butternut. Worst of all, he had to speak a piece on Friday and was thoroughly scared. Suppose that one of us could have shared with him our deterministic mood about being helpless chips. Go tell him that if he cannot speak then he cannot speak. Tell him that we are merely transient and ineffectual pawns played by fate. If he believes us, we will have spoiled one of the most powerful forces in American history, for that boy was Daniel Webster. Thank heaven, he did not surrender to the idea that he was a helpless chip. I suspect, upon the contrary, that he said to himself something like this: My father is undertaking almost intolerable financial burdens to give me the opportunity of an education—I must not fail him; one way or another I must get under my responsibility. And, lo, the consequences were not disproportionate to large problems.

This deterministic mood of ours about being helpless chips tossed on the sea of great social forces is not factually correct. The most tremendous forces in the world both for good and evil are not huge and planetary; they are moral and vital. The chestnut trees of New England are practically gone. What destroyed them was a fungus brought into Long Island from the Orient about thirty years ago. On what small hinges do large consequences swing! O my

soul, keep your perspective straight about this! One man watches an apple fall and the cosmic outlook of the whole race is changed. One man watches the steam lift the lid of the kettle on his mother's stove and the structure of civilization is rebuilt by the machine. One man experiments with a new force to get light and not a corner on the planet will escape the consequence. What do we mean by big things? All the big things are small in origin, vital, like ideas that flame from mind to mind until, a prairie fire, they sweep the world.

If some one says, You are talking about geniuses, the few select spirits of large influence, and are leaving out us common folk, I answer, No, I am thinking about all of us. A personal friend lately talked with a member of the British Government, a man who would have weight in deciding whether or not Great Britain would enter a war if it broke on the Continent. My friend asked him a point-blank question: Would Great Britain go into another war? and he received a point-blank answer: No, not unless the churches changed their mind. As it is now, no government could take England into war against the opposition of the churches. If that is true in Britain, it either is or can be true in the United States. When enough people shoulder their responsibility, there are no visible limits around the consequence.

Today, for example, we are tempted to think of suffering in impersonal, titanic terms, as though the world's catastrophic trouble were a great flood upon which we are tossed. Yet, consider this from a wise observer: "Half the world's sorrow comes from the unwisdom of parents." So! Even today, with all the other causes of suffering, I suspect that is true. Close at hand, within our reach, where our personal responsibility lies, where we are not helpless chips tossed about, half the sorrow of mankind comes from the unwisdom of parents.

There is no problem on earth so huge that it can be truly described if individual responsibility is not put at the center of it. Great Britain in India is one of the largest political problems in the world. What, then, are some of the major difficulties in the way of its solution? Here is one Indian of the kind the British Empire might well desire to have friendly to British rule in India, yet this is what he says, "When I think of the British in India, I always see a drunken, rough soldier who entered our house and whipped my aunt, or a Customs official (probably a Eurasian) who hit my father for being in his wife's way on the pavement." At first one is shocked at the disproportion between the largeness of the problem and the smallness of the incidents. But take it, not from me, but from the loyal Britisher who tells the story: that Indian put his finger upon one of the major difficulties in the situation. Indeed, put yourself in the Indian's place! You know! There is no problem on earth so large that its cause and cure do not root back in individual responsibilities.

I must confess, however, that for one I should not assume personal responsibility in this present time with any zest if I thought that the world at large were only a mechanical, aimless, godless, physical system. So would Isaiah have said. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord"—that was basic with him, a world of spiritual origin and purpose, and at the heart of it a living God with whom one could

(*Continued on page 74*)

Prayer

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

Eternal God, Who art spiritual life and Whom to know aright is spiritual life, we worship Thee. Clarify our minds that we may think of Thee more truly. Clear our imaginations that we may see Thee more plainly. But above all, deepen our lives that we may understand Thee more genuinely. We cannot know love without loving, nor truth without being truthful. How can we know Thee if the divine life be not in us? Therefore, open Thou the doors of our lives, O God, and let Thy beauty, Thy truth, Thy peace, Thy goodness come in, that we may know Thee because we possess Thee.

Be not discouraged with us, O God. If Thou triest one door and we will not let Thee in, try another. Come to us in the sense of duty. Knock at our consciences. Allure us through ideals and deal with us through friendship. Only be not discouraged with us, Spirit of the living God, Who cometh by a private gateway into every soul.

Great Thou art and greatly to be praised. Saints, apostles, prophets, and martyrs have magnified Thee. Yet is this unreal to us unless our hearts praise Thee. What the fathers discovered we must rediscover if it is to be our own. So grant that we may find Thee in the secret places of our own hearts and understand better what the great souls have said about Thee in the past. Send us out thus equipped with new faith, fresh courage, deeper vision, larger wisdom, to cope with the difficult and desperate circumstances of this trying time.

We do not ask for easier lives but we ask to be stronger men. Give us larger faith, wider margins of spiritual resource around our daily need, and deeper wells to draw our fortitude and comfort from. To all who sincerely seek to do Thy will grant wisdom in these days to know what it were well that mankind should do. Beget in us a passion for social justice. Let not the cries of the distressed grow tiresome to our ears. Let not the thought of the disinherited wear out in our minds. May we never in any situation be meanly content. Make us Christlike, O God. Beget the Spirit of the Man of Nazareth in our hearts in serious earnest, that we may say, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me. So prepare us in spirit to build a more decent world into which souls may be born.

Now cross those inner thresholds, we beseech Thee, that often keep close friends out. There are hearts here made bitter by the ills of life and souls crushed by the troubles of life and spirits lonely because of the bereavements of life, and consciences discouraged by the power of life's temptations. Minister to us, not according to our ability to ask but according to Thine insight into our needs and Thine infinite resource in Christ. Amen.

The Six Carillons of Amsterdam

By Kamiel Lefévere

(The Tenth in a series of Articles on "Singing Towers")

They sing for justice, peace and good will;
All over the city; from hill to hill.

Amsterdam, capital and largest city of Holland, dates back to the thirteenth century. As a poor little fishing town, it was ruled by the Lords of Amstel, who held it in fee from the bishops of Utrecht. The year 1369 marked a period of prosperity after Amsterdam signed a union treaty with the Hanseatic League. Its great period of development, however, dates from the sixteenth century, when persecution and foreign invasion drove many enterprising merchants from Flanders into the North Netherlands for a freer life and existence.

Amsterdam, rightly called the "Dutch Venice," because of its numerous little canals spreading over the whole city in the design of a huge spider's web, is entirely built on piles driven into the marshy surface soil. A pleasant medley of ancient fronts and modern houses against wide luminous skies, lining the picturesque quays, gives a most fascinating character to the city and creates a sensation of exploring by land and water in contrast with the old stuffiness of its narrow little side-streets and alleys, still revealing costumes and customs of days gone by.

The characteristic beauty of carillon music found its first significant expression during Amsterdam's greatest period of prosperity and artistic revelations of the seventeenth century, lending its color and atmosphere to the creations of famous artists, such as Jacob Van Ruisdael, Rembrandt van Rijn, Eglon Van der Neer, Backhuysen, Adriaen Van de Velde, Meindert Hobbema, Nicolaes Maes and many others whose world-admired paintings and merry celebrations were characteristic of the city even as was the joyous singing of the bells. It was also during this golden period that the famous bell-founders, Franz and Pieter Hemony, created their beautiful carillons of silvery tone and perfect harmony at Amsterdam.

1. The Carillon of the Royal Palace

The Royal Palace, a massive building, with its peculiar and unusual Singing Tower, dates from 1648-1655. The architect was Jacob van Campen. The very noticeable absence of any great central doorway in this building, which was the original town hall, is intentional, the object being to prevent a sudden entrance by a large group of people in times of unrest and revolt. The most unusual feature of this massive building is its foundation, which consists of 13,659 piles, driven into the ground to a depth of seventy feet.

The Tower was completed in 1665, ten years after the dedication of the building. The original plans, made by Jacob van Noorden, were of a slightly different character, and the cupola, at the present forming a half globe, was more of a slanting type, and was to be surrounded by eight statues, representing the wind-directions, and with a

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large mermaid as weathervane. This weathervane, however, together with other changes, took the form of a Galleon or "Dutch Cog," as at present, and affords the visitors a most interesting panorama of the city.

The carillon consists of thirty-seven bells, of which thirty-five came from the foundry of the famous Hemony Brothers in 1664. The two smallest bells were cast by Claes van Noorden in 1699. All the bells are installed in such a position as to form two circles around the largest bell inside the cupola.

Mr. J. Vincent, who has been carillonneur at the Royal Palace since 1900, and city carillonneur at Weesp, has done a great deal to create interest and admiration for the art. He was also the adviser in the restoration of old and neglected carillons throughout Holland, and is a prominent figure in the music world.

2. The Carillon of the Old, or St. Nicolas, Church

In the oldest part of the city, away from all the noise of busy and restless city life, rises the Singing Tower of the Old, or St. Nicolas, Church, on the peaceful border of an old canal. The crystal tones of the bells come tumbling down through the mighty trees, echoing in complete harmony with the soft breezes over the peaceful canal, finding their way into the quiet neighborhood, like old acquaintances on friendly visits.

The Church, with its beautiful tower, was built in 1306, but the spire, which later served as an example for many other towers, was erected in 1566 by Joost Janszoon, named Bilhamer.

The "voorslach," or mechanical player, dates from 1532, although there were already a few bells in the tower around 1450. In 1561 thirteen bells were ordered and were cast by Jan Jaspers Moer. In 1566 eighteen bells were installed of which thirteen were cast by Jacob Waghevens and Adriaen Steylaert of Mechelen and were later transferred to the Zuider Kerk in 1617. Different numbers of bells by different bellfounders had a short existence during the following years until in 1658 a "perfect tuned set of bells," numbering thirty-five, by the Hemony brothers was installed. Three more bells were added in 1700, cast by Claes Noorden and Albertus de Graeve. Four larger bells in a lower part of the belfry are by Fr. Hemony, 1659, by Pieter Seest, 1771, and by Claude Fremy, 1689.

Mr. Frans Hasselaer is the carillonneur and Willen Creman the very enthusiastic assistant carillonneur with a diploma from the Mechlin Carillon School. The latter is also city carillonneur of Zwolle.

3. The Carillon of the Westerkerk

This beautiful church, with its magnificent tower 279 feet high and taller than any other tower in the city, was built during the years 1620-1638 after the plans of Hendrik de Keyser. Two of Holland's greatest artists, Rembrandt van Rijn and Nicolaes Berchman, are buried within this church.

A fine carillon of thirty-five bells, by Franz Hemony, dating 1657-1658, with the large bell weighing 4,915 pounds, sends it tones over the nearby canals and old houses, its life-long companions.

4. The Carillon of the Munt-Toren

The Munt-Toren (Mint-Tower), which was built during the fifteenth

century, has a small carillon in the slender and pleasing belfry which was added to the building in 1620. The carillon consists of twenty-eight bells, the largest bell weighing 1,638 pounds, and cast by F. and P. Hemony dating 1651.

It faces one of the busy market-places, throwing its slender reflection into the old and quiet canal that leisurely loiters beside it. The delicate effect of the tinkling melodies, mechanically played every fifteen minutes on this small carillon, hanging in the belfry openings, improves the modern surroundings with a refreshing touch of pastel daintiness.

5. The Carillon of the Zuider Kerk

The Zuider Kerk, or Southern Church, built in 1603, its Singing Tower being completed in 1614, looks over some of the most picturesque canals and neighborhoods of the city. This carillon of thirty-five bells, of which thirty-two were cast by Franz and Pieter Hemony in 1656, and the three smallest by Nicolaes van Noorden in 1700, enlivens this rather quiet part of the city with occasional recitals.

6. The Carillon of the Rijks-Museum

The Rijks-Museum, or National Museum, dating from 1885, after the plans of P. Cuypers, and containing the finest and largest collection of Dutch masterpieces in painting, has a small carillon of twenty-four bells in its belfry, of which fourteen bells were cast by Van den Gheyn, dating from 1552 and 1583. These bells used to sing from the tower of Arnemuiden, Zeeland.

The thousands of visitors in and around the building are pleasantly reminded of the time through a "voor-slach," or mechanical player, creating a proper atmosphere by their old and quaint Dutch melodies in harmony with the whole setting.

> Music dims as a fading song,
> Silence wraps the gathering dusk
> With a cloak of rest and peace.

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SERMON

(Continued from page 69)

coöperate. So he did not need to pity himself. So he could not evade the problem of his personal character in being a fellow worker with God. So he need not be discouraged by the disproportion between the size of the problem and his individual gift. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord . . . high and lifted up . . . and I said, Here am I; send me."

PRAYER

Eternal God, our Father, lift us up, we beseech Thee, above all our self-defenses and self-deceits, and give us honesty and courage that we may so deal with ourselves and so let Thee deal with us, that we too may be sent of Thee into this generation. Amen.

Dr. Fosdick preached the foregoing sermon on December 2, 1934.

The Movie Outlook

By Fred Eastman

If the producers think that the Catholics, Protestants and Jews, who are working together for better movies, are seeking only decency in films, they think wrong. Decency is good, but it is not enough. It is a negative thing—the absence of dirt and impropriety. Religious people want far more. They want honest pictures, sincere pictures, great pictures. They want freedom for the motion picture art to develop in the service of all the people. They want America's good name abroad protected and enhanced—and no longer defamed. They want the local exhibitor freed from the block-booking system so that he may choose his pictures in accordance with the wishes of his clientele. They want the producers to be the allies, not the enemies, of the home, the school, and the church. They want their coöperation in the task of building a better country and a better world.

Honesty, sincerity, greatness—these positive qualities will not be attained in great quantity so long as producers think only of quick profits and forget that their ultimate prosperity is linked with the welfare of the American people. Even on the basis of profits, however, the producers misjudge their market if they think the majority of the American people want dirt rather than greatness in their pictures. They have been entirely too prone to judge the taste of their audiences by the loud haw-haws of the idiot fringe.

Strong Dramas Wanted

This point cannot be too greatly stressed: the American people do not want wishy-washy pictures. The idea which the spiritually-minded people, who are a majority of the American public, are trying so earnestly to get across to the half-dozen men who control the motion picture industry is that the drama they want is strong drama, and that strength does not depend upon dirt. In the Chicago Theological Seminary, where the writer of these lines conducts a dramatic workshop, we are accustomed to tear plays apart to see what makes them click. We have worked out the following tests of a good drama:

Does it reach the emotions?
Do the characters seem real and worth knowing?
Is the conflict adequate?
Does the conflict rise to a climax?
Is the suspense maintained?
Do the characters have to make important choices?
Is the theme clear and worth while?
Does the play reveal a struggle common to the experience of the audience?
Is the solution convincing?
Is the dialogue concise and crisp?
Does the play present contrasts of characters and circumstances?
Does it have a well-built structure?

Any drama that meets these tests has in it the qualities of permanent human interest. The tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, the comedies of Aristophanes, the plays of Shakespeare and the other classics down to the best modern dramas of Eugene O'Neill,

Maxwell Anderson, Sidney Howard, Marc Connelly and Philip Barry ring the bell in these tests.

Recent examples in the movies of films that pass these tests—*The Barretts of Wimpole Street, Little Women, David Harum, Skippy, Cavalcade, Death Takes a Holiday, House of Rothschild, Berkeley Square, Lady for a Day, Great Expectations, What Every Woman Knows*—these are not only wholesome pictures, they meet the tests of strong drama. And note this: every one of them has been a box-office success.

How Secure Them?

How can the American people secure such pictures? How can they steer the producers away from the cheap and tawdry and toward the great? How can they protect their children and the country's reputation abroad? The various answers to these questions are gradually sifting down to four. First, by continued patronage of the best. Second, by box-office boycott of unwholesome pictures. Third, by public education to develop discrimination and to acquaint the people with the social issues involved in the movie situation. Fourth, by legislation to outlaw block-booking and blind-selling and to give the public some form of liberal social control without censorship.

The first method—continued patronage of the best—is obvious and needs no more urging than a thirsty traveler needs urging to drink good water.

The second method—box-office boycott—is a common sense way that has already proven highly successful. If every patron of the theatre will join the Legion of Decency and boycott weak and unwholesome pictures, such pictures will be turned into financial liabilities for the producers. It costs no money to join this Legion. It requires simply the signing of a pledge to refrain from attending such movies. A pledge card can be obtained from any alert priest, minister or rabbi, or from the National Conference of Jews and Christians, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York.

Protecting the Children

Akin to one's personal boycott is the equally important step of helping children to select the pictures they see. Most children today have no such help either from their parents or from older brothers and sisters. Appraisals of forthcoming pictures should, of course, be taken from independent sources and not from the industry's publicity in the newspapers and advertising columns. The National Film Estimate Service, 64 East Lake Street, Chicago, provides independent appraisals of seven pictures each week, and classifies them as to their suitability for adults, youth, and children. These appraisals are published in many of the leading religious and educational journals.

The third method—public education—is the most powerful weapon for this or any other reform. Ordinarily for a project as vital as this, the coöperation of the newspapers may be enlisted. But most newspapers are so dependent upon motion picture advertising that only the most courageous of them will risk helping. The education of the public, therefore, will have to be accomplished through parent-teacher associations, women's clubs, church societies, Rotary, Kiwanis, and other civic and religious bodies. If every one of these will put this subject upon its discussion programs for the coming year, it will accomplish much toward

public education. These organizations depend for their membership tomorrow upon the children who are being moulded in the movies today. Materials for this public education are now available. The chief source for them is the Motion Picture Research Council at 366 Madison Avenue, New York. That organization initiated and sponsored the Payne Fund Studies. It is directed by many of the leading social workers, scientists and educators of the country. Its program includes: continued research, presenting the findings without fear or favor to the public; securing the coöperation and coördination of local agencies interested in better movies; encouraging the production of films to meet community needs; and all steps necessary to free the motion picture art from its prostitution by commercial interests. Membership in the Council brings its bulletins and keeps one in touch with the national movement for better films.

The fourth method—legislation—is the only one by which the public has any hope of breaking block-booking and blind-selling. Until these systems have been broken, the local exhibitor has no choice in the selection of his films. It is useless to blame him for bad pictures. He has to buy his pictures in large blocks, the bad along with the good. The industry calls block-booking a method of wholesaling. It is nothing of the sort. No wholesale grocer could require a retail merchant to buy the wholesaler's entire year's output—the bad along with the good. It is nothing more nor less than a shrewd device to make the movie exhibitor bear the brunt of the industry's weak pictures without giving him a chance to select. A bill to outlaw this system will be introduced into the next Congress. Those who want to make their efforts for better movies most effective will write to their senators and representatives asking their support for this bill.

Ultimately two other forms of legislative control without censorship will probably be found essential: One, a law giving power to the State Department to withhold from foreign circulation those pictures that might get America into trouble or defame her national reputation. The other, a law to establish a non-partisan federal motion picture commission which will bring to the making of pictures *at the source of production* the point of view of men and women who want, not to make money out of the pictures, but to develop them as a means of making better citizens.

Social Control Without Censorship

Such laws are not an attempt to legislate morality. No sane person would try any such thing. They are simply a way of making an aroused public conscience effective in social action. They are not censorship. Censorship is futile for it waits until a picture is made and distributed and then attempts with a pair of scissors to cut out its unwholesome parts. The devil cannot be cut out of the pictures with a pair of scissors. The laws here outlined look only toward a liberal social control which will release the real artists of the screen and restore to the local theatre the right of choice in the selection of its pictures.

The Importance of Struggle

Such a program, which begins with ourselves and our own children, and reaches out to the community and the

(*Continued on page 79*)

The Latchstring

Do you drive your car in the wintertime in New York? If so, you are familiar with the hazards of slippery pavements and the unaccountable disposition of an otherwise tractable vehicle to dart suddenly across the line of traffic or to begin a menacing slide toward scurrying pedestrians. The following paragraph from our friend, Wilbert Smith, of the Y.M.C.A. in Cairo, tells of a slightly different sort of peril which faces the desert-driver. From a round robin letter recently received from Mr. Smith we get the following description of a trip he had recently taken across the desert to Suez, over the Canal on a small ferry, and then 185 miles over the desert of the Sinai Peninsula. Mr. Smith says, "The road is well marked, but the sand drifts across it in some places so it looks like drifting snow in northern New York. An American friend of the Socony-Vacuum Corporation was with me. He knows desert driving and when we came to a sand drift, at least three feet deep and several yards across, it was his experience that helped us. We softened the tires as much as possible and, in spite of the drift being upon a rather sharp incline, were able to plunge over the sand safely. It was a thrilling moment. Had we stuck, it might have meant 24 hours in the desert until some wandering Bedouin on a camel might be sighted to bring us rescue. Coming back we had three such experiences: one of which nearly proved disastrous as the car skidded in the sand to the edge of a cliff and was dangerously near toppling over. Granger's skill in jacking up the rear wheel and making a path of stones saved the situation. Then our lights went bad and for fifteen miles we drove by starlight, trusting to good fortune to avoid the sand. A huge drift, nearly 20 yards across, forced us to detour, but we reached the canal at ten at night after a fourteen-hour journey."

A rather vivid realization of what sacrifices families have to make when they are involved in foreign service is gained from considering the dispersion of the Smith family over the world this winter. As the above letter from Mr. Smith indicates, he himself is in Cairo in the Y.M.C.A. Mrs. Smith is in New York, living at 99 Claremont Avenue, and happily for us, is one of our "missionary congregation." One son, Wilbert, Jr., is at St. Alban's School, Washington, D. C.; a daughter, Elizabeth, is a freshman at Vassar; and Frederick is a boarding pupil at The Riverdale Country Day School. We are happy to bring them together in this brief space in the columns of THE CHURCH MONTHLY.

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A letter on our desk from Mrs. Constance Frith of Turks Islands, of British West Indies, tells interestingly of a fishing expedition upon which she and her husband engaged on a number of Sundays this fall when they were trying to get the Sunday Vesper Service to which they had been listening over the radio in other years at 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon. Mrs. Frith said she had just written a friend in New York to find out whether or not Dr. Fosdick was on the air this year when "two Sundays ago we were both about to take our siesta, my husband, having gotten up from the hammock where he was

resting, in passing through the room just turned on the radio to see if there was anything worth while . . . and your voice filled the room with startling clearness! We listened, of course, to the balance of your talk, and last Sunday tuned in at 3:45 and heard the whole address —about being 'pulled together'—brought to a perfect whole through God."

We pass this paragraph on to our readers that they may have a mental picture during these winter Sunday afternoons of friends down in the West Indies who associate the Sunday afternoon radio service with leisurely siestas, swinging hammocks, and shaded porches. Dr. Fosdick's radio mail tells other equally interesting stories of people in the heart of Africa who pick up the broadcasts in the early hours of the morning, while still others tune in at remote ranch houses in the Northwest.

THE MOVIE OUTLOOK

(*Continued from page 77*)

nation, is practicable and urgent. Nothing less must be accomplished if the public is to prevent a short-sighted and misdirected industry from defeating the work of the home, the school, and the church. The fight for better movies may be as difficult as the fight our fathers made thirty years ago for pure food, but it is more important. Historians in the future may look back upon this struggle as no less important than that which confronted Horace Mann and William Lloyd Garrison and Abraham Lincoln. With something of their courage and endurance, success may yet crown the combined efforts of the Catholics, Jews and Protestants who work for better motion pictures.

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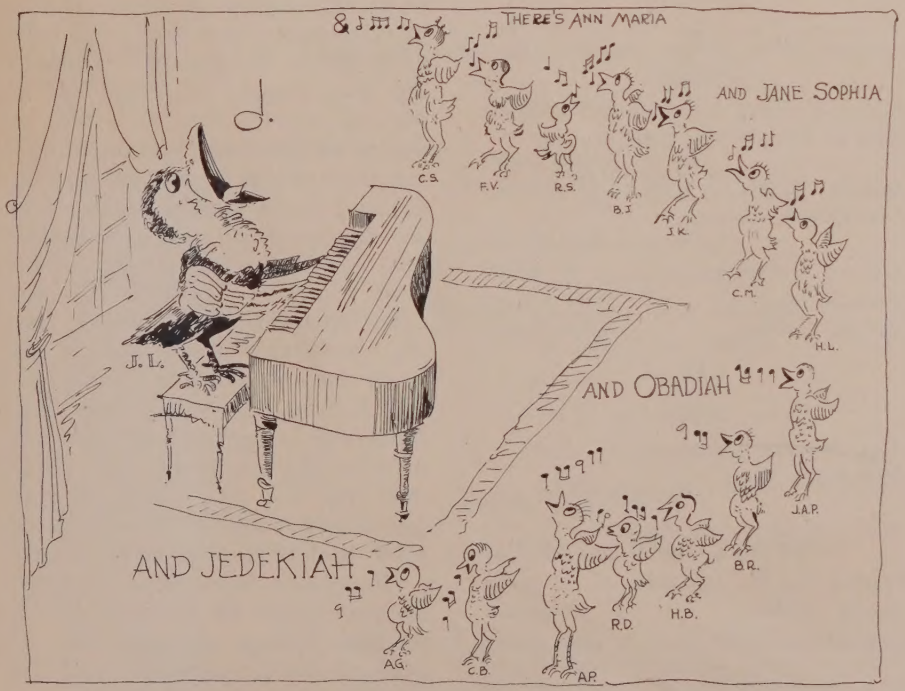

A UNIQUE CHRISTMAS CARD

Mr. Judson League, Director of the Men's Class Chorus, greeted his friends at Christmas with this very interesting card. A microscopic study of the initials will identify the tenors and bassos of this group to their friends in the congregation.

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ASSUMPTIONS

In working out the program of such a church as The Riverside Church is coming to be it has been necessary to proceed upon certain assumptions. We have assumed that members of the church would expect to support the church according to their ability and that they would appreciate the necessity of our handling the matter of budget pledges and payments in a routine business way without interpreting notices from time to time as in any sense personal or unduly importunate. On the whole, in fact almost without exception, we have found this assumption justified and yet occasionally an individual indicates that in his or her particular case our assumption at this point was quite without warrant. Then again we find within the church a person who professes by attitude and by participation in our worship and work to be deeply and genuinely interested but who, though well established in life and evidently able and willing to pay his way in all other spheres, blandly goes on from year to year without contributing to the work of the church in any department. In such an individual case our general assumption breaks down. Such an individual does not differ essentially from another class who, being able to give liberally and living on an economic and social scale that is definitely in the luxury class, contributes to the church on a scale that many small wage-working men or self-respecting shop girls would feel altogether inadequate for themselves and unfair to their privileges in the church.

We have no disposition to relinquish our assumptions. On the whole they are justified. Perhaps what we really are hoping is that this paragraph may have a very general reading.

BOOK AND PAMPHLET SERVICE

OF

The Church Monthly

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Dr. Fosdick's Latest Book of Sermons

THE SECRET OF VICTORIOUS LIVING

Published by Harper and Brothers. Price, $1.50, including postage.

It is available on our Literature Table.

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Between the covers of this new book by Dr. Fosdick will be found the following sermons:

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The Towering Question: Is Christianity Possible?
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The Use and Misuse of Power
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